

Governor's Commission on Family Farms

March 8, 2000

Berry Hill Mansion, Frankfort

10 AM EST

Chairman Naïve called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. and the secretary called the roll.

Members present: Jim Naive, Chairman; Bill Atkins; Alice Baesler; John Berry; Ron Catchen; Sharon Furches; John-Mark Hack; Don Halcomb; Mark Haney; Susan Harkins; Hampton "Hoppy" Henton; Denise Hoffman; Janet Johnson; David Kash; Sylvia Lovely; Mattie Mack; Luther Mason; Ken Mattingly; Al Pedigo; William Brandon Reed; Secretary Allen Rose; and Commissioner Billy Ray Smith.

Absent were: Karen Armstrong-Cummings; Paul Hornback; Chris Kummer; John Medley Jr.; Stephen Price; and Bob Sparks.

Guests: Paula Sinicropi, USDA; Sharon Burton, The Farmer's Pride; John Crowder, KCTCS; Emil Jezik, Workforce Development Cabinet; and Mac Stone, Kentucky State University.

The minutes of the January 26, 2000, meeting were approved as written.

The Chairman welcomed Commission members and guests to the meeting.

Hoppy Henton advised that Paula Sinicropi with USDA, would be joining the meeting soon.

Chairman Naïve advised the members that Mr. Gaines would be unable to attend the meeting. He further stated that efforts to have Mr. Gaines at a commission meeting would continue.

Janet Johnson and Chris Clark discussed "The Farm to Table Connection-A Proposal from the Mammoth Cave Area Extension Service." The mission of this project is to develop a network among agencies that would educate both the consumers and the producers. In workshop type settings, producers would be educated on entrepreneurial opportunities that would diversify farm income, learn marketing skills to acquire a larger share of the consumer market, and increased awareness of consumer purchase trends and food safety concerns. The consumers would be educated on the availability of Kentucky agricultural products and the benefits provided by purchasing and consuming these products. This plan is visionary and doable. It's long-term partnering with the Department of Agriculture, the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, and ongoing programs insure success for producers willing to make the effort.

Janet and Chris asked the Commission to lend its support to the project by assisting in finding the funds to implement the programs.

Many of the members were very supportive of this proposal pointing out that its goals fit exactly with the Commission's goals. Ron Catchen pointed out that Commissioner Jezik, Department of Technical Education, would explain how the Agricultural consortium could work to make this program even more successful.

There was a motion and second that the Commission support this proposal. The motion passed.

John-Mark Hack detailed HB611 Committee Substitute. There were many questions and much discussion. The Commission members were very distressed that this piece of legislation passed the house. There was a motion and second that the Commission formulate a resolution asking the Governor to support restoring the original provisions of HB 611, and stating that the Commission supports such an act. The motion passed unanimously. It was suggested that the Chairman hand deliver the resolution to the Governor and express the Commission's stand on this issue.

Don Halcomb advised that he had attended a meeting in Louisville. At this meeting he met David Cole, a Virginia Tech professor that teaches entrepreneurship programs at Cornell.

Don stressed that the Commission should support all legislation encouraging entrepreneurship, and that the Commission's Center for Entrepreneurship should have a business plan, which would include educational components, coordination, venture capital etc. The Center must have a larger vision for possibilities. In order to assist others, you must first possess the expertise to do so. Perhaps we should bring in a consultant that could assist with The Center? Funding for such a consultant was discussed (i.e., KFB, Governor's Ag Policy Office, State Rural Development Board, etc.)

*Commissioner Billy Ray Smith discussed many of the Department of Agriculture's ongoing programs that are addressing the current farm crisis; new programs that the Department will be implementing in the near future; intermediate and long-term programs that will stabilize and improve the farm economy; and how the Department informs the farmer of these services.

Commissioner Emil Jezik, Department of Technical Education in the Cabinet for Workforce Development explained the dynamics of the "Agricultural Consortium." Dr. Jezik explained that a consortium is a meeting of the minds. He pointed out that the United States is competing against each other in a global market. We must get together, find commonalities and meet those needs. The criteria for making a consortium work are as follows: understand the environment; identify what opportunities are out there; be willing to make changes; establish and

attend regular meetings; discuss positives and negatives OPENLY; and establish leadership. The results if all of these criteria are followed are: shared knowledge and contract with each other.

Susan Harkins asked Dr. Jezik to discuss the concept of the consortium vs. the coop. Dr. Jezik advised that the coop deals with 1 product. The consortium would have the voice of every product in the region. Ron Catchen elaborated on this, explaining that coops would consort by sharing information, expensive equipment, bonding together for grant application, etc.

Ron Catchen advised that the last meeting of the education committee was very good. He referred to the *outline of the education committee's plan of action. Section I, Part A, is a consortium. Ron suggested that perhaps the Governor call these people together for an educational summit in July. Ron continued reviewing the outline. Chairman Naïve advised that the Commission would spend much of the next meeting addressing and acting upon the Education Committee's recommendations.

The next meeting of the Commission on Family Farms will be on April 19, at the Berry Hill Mansion.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

*A copy of the handouts are on file in the Commission on Family Farms meeting folder located in the Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy.